

FASD News and Views



A Michigan Coalition for Fetal Alcohol Resources, Education and Support (MCFARES) Newsletter



Established in 2003

Questions We Are Asked

Question: *My daughter is 14-years-old. She came to our family when she was 2-years-old and for many years we had a close, happy relationship. Over the last two to three years, though, our relationship has deteriorated to the point that I no longer have any desire to be with her except for the most necessary tasks (meals, bedtime, church). We constantly argue and she will only rarely follow through on my requests (completing her schoolwork, picking up her room, helping out at mealtimes). She maintains fairly good grades, has some good friends at school (and some she sees outside school) and generally maintains appropriate behavior at school. She rarely fights with her younger siblings and is great with our family pets. How can I improve our relationship?*

Answer: Parenting a teen is challenging and definitely different than parenting a preteen. One of the biggest parenting challenges is deciphering our kids' behaviors and re-directing the challenging behaviors into more productive behaviors. Taking a parenting class on this new stage of development can provide insight and give you the opportunity to gain support from others in group who are sharing your experiences. Check with your local mental health agency for a list of agencies that provide parenting classes.

The transition from childhood to adulthood is not only a challenge for your daughter but likely for you, too. That sweet, cuddly toddler who looked to you to meet her every need has transitioned into



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the young lady who wants to test her ability to make her own choices. Sometimes what looks like defiance and opposition is her attempt to form thoughts and opinions that are different and separate from yours. Assess your interactions with her. Are you available to talk when she makes the attempt (even if it is late at night before bed or while you are trying to get supper on the table)? Are you trying to micromanage every aspect of her life (ensuring that she wears a warm jacket if the day is going to be chilly; packing her lunch so that she has available a balanced meal)? Choose your battles wisely and allow and encourage safe exploration. Though it may be hard to see right

now, the firm foundation that you set for her early on is still there. Her ability to explore her world and build healthy relationships are there because of the foundation you gave her. Now she needs healthy and novel ways to put it to practice. The decrease in tension between the two of you will create opportunity for her to seek you out. Do what you can to keep her safe and minimize tension between you. Grab the moments when things are calm to do things together and reconnect.

In addition to her desire for independence, your daughter is experiencing other changes including raging hormones, bodily changes that she cannot completely understand, and she may be experiencing a new school/peer environment which may be stressful for her to navigate. She is seeking autonomy and is desperately trying to find her identity. Her job at this stage is to transition to adulthood. This is both exciting and scary. In addition, her brain won't fully develop until she is in her mid-20s. All of this contributes to a sense of instability and conflicting feelings. These changes may be contributing to her moodiness and unpredictability. As you have loved, supported and guided her for most of her life, she feels safe to share her most challenging feelings and behaviors with you. While this may be very stressful for you, there are some things you can do to improve your relationship with her.

During this stage of her life, the primary area of the brain in development is the prefrontal cortex (PFC). This area dialogues with the emotion brain (limbic system). It is unknown how this brain development is different for children who were prenatally exposed to alcohol and can vary depending on many factors. What is common for most teens, though, even typically developing ones, is that teens need the adults in their life to be the external brain for their prefrontal cortex. Helping your daughter to feel engaged in their choices and understand consequences is a good way to act as

her external brain. Of course, this is easier said than done; especially, if your child has difficulty with linking cause and effect. We can think of our job as parents of teens shifting from nurturing hand holder to facilitator. Create opportunities for your child to be in safe environments with safe people where they can explore their world and experience new things to help her discover who she is.

Plan a time when you can have a calm conversation with your daughter. With her input, develop a set clear expectations – both what you expect of her and what she expects from you. Agreements should be written in clear, positive, concrete language which include positive consequences for when agreements are kept. Come to an agreement about what the consequences would be if a commitment is not kept. Write these expectations down and post them somewhere prominent in your home. Keep up the commitments that you and your daughter placed on the list for you. For example, if you and she agreed that she be allowed a midnight bedtime on weekends, follow-through on that commitment. Likewise, help her to realize that she is expected to follow through on the commitments that she placed on the list for herself. A simple, non-threatening reminder asked in a curious manner (i.e., “What did we decide” and reminding her of the list) may help avoid disagreements. If you continue to have challenges with verbal conversations, try passing a journal back-and-forth and writing questions/responses in the journal. This method may take the emotion and potential argument out of the mix and help your daughter to share her thoughts more freely.

Reframing expectations for them and us can help. Celebrate even minor accomplishments, enjoy the moments and compliment her attempts at appropriate conversation. Positively acknowledge her attempts to follow-through on your requests. Try to plan some time for the two of you to be alone

doing some type of activity, especially one that she enjoys. For example, if your daughter likes to have her nails done, plan a salon day for the two of you. You're journey may feel like the punishment of Sisyphus, but one day you may discover that the behaviors improve as she matures.

And, of great importance but often overlooked: take time for yourself. In order for you to have the energy, patience and stamina to meet the needs of your family, you must build up some reserves.

Regularly schedule time for activities that will give you peace and comfort. Nurture supportive relationships and minimize toxic relationships. Ask for and accept help and remember that this, too, shall pass.

If you have any FASD-related questions, please send them to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org

SAVE THE DATE

Macomb County FASDay, 2017

On Saturday, September 9, 2017 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Fellowship Chapel in Sterling Heights, MCFARES will host an open Project SAFE meeting to recognize International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day (FASDay). We will enjoy a meal together, learn about FASD, hear from some of our families and play our annual FASD Trivia Game. Plan to join us for the fun and invite your family members and professionals.

MCFARES has hosted an event to mark FASDay since 2005. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us this year. For more information, please contact Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.



If you would like to announce your FASDay event in the July edition of this newsletter, please send your information to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.

Key Facts on Alcohol and Pregnancy

There is no safe amount or type of alcohol to consume during pregnancy. Any amount of alcohol, even if it's just one glass of wine, passes from the mother to the baby. It makes no difference if the alcohol is wine, beer, or liquor (vodka, rum, tequila, etc.)

A developing baby can't process alcohol. Developing babies lack the ability to process alcohol with their liver, which is not fully formed. They absorb all of the alcohol and have the same blood alcohol content as the mother.

Alcohol causes more harm than heroin or cocaine during pregnancy. The Institute of Medicine says, "Of all the substances of abuse (including cocaine, heroin, and marijuana), alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus."

Alcohol used during pregnancy can result in FASD. An estimated 40,000 newborns each year are affected by FAS, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or have FASD, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, with damage ranging from major to subtle.

1 in 100 babies have FASD, nearly the same rate as Autism. FASD is more prevalent than Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, SIDS, Cystic Fibrosis, and Spina Bifida combined. Alcohol use during pregnancy is the leading preventable cause of birth defects, developmental disabilities, and learning disabilities.

Taken from the NOFAS website (<https://www.nofas.org/factsheets/>)

What did the duck say to the crackers? I am "quack"ers for you.

GoodSearch

Please consider helping MCFARES to raise funds to support individuals and families who are affected by pre-natal exposure to alcohol. Each time you conduct a search at <http://www.goodsearch.com/>, a donation is made to MCFARES. Please designate MCFARES as your charity of choice. You can also use GoodShop for your on-line shopping needs. A percentage of your on-line purchases will be donated to MCFARES.

Amazon Smile

If you shop on-line with Amazon.com, please consider using this link: A donation to MCFARES will be made each time you shop: [smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2394822](https://www.amazon.com/ch/35-2394822)



Donate Time – Work with Us!

Do you have a few hours to spare? We have several different opportunities to help you put your spare time to good use. Do you like kids? Maybe you can enjoy Project S.A.F.E. with us and supervise the children after dinner so that parents have some time to talk. Do you have website-building skills? We'd love your help re-designing and updating the MCFARES website. Do you have newsletter-designing skills? We could use your help putting the quarterly MCFARES FASD News and Views newsletter together (we'll develop the content and you can organize it into the newsletter).

Pure Michigan



Tulips in Holland



Vision: The Coalition strengthens served communities' ability to eliminate prenatal alcohol exposure and provide support to persons and families impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) by delivering exemplary professional education, public awareness, and support.

Mission: Bridging the gap between individual needs and community services

To find out how you can help us work toward our vision and mission, contact us at info@mcfares.org.

Braggs

<p style="text-align: center;">Shianna</p> <p>6-year-old Shianna started her new day treatment school program and adores it. She has attended full school days for the last two weeks. She was unable to attend more than half a school day in previous school programs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Joy</p> <p>14-year-old Joy got all “Satisfactory” marks for citizenship on her last report card. That has NEVER happened before for her.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Joshua</p> <p>23-year-old Joshua earned his brown belt in karate.</p>	

Kid Funny

My 6-year-old daughter was touching my parenting books. When I asked her not to touch them because they were a gift from Nana to help me learn how to be a good momma, she said, “Well, they got the WRONG ‘structions in there all right!”

Free/Low-Cost Michigan Warm Weather Fun

Warm weather has finally arrived! While I'm excited to be outside, the change in seasons also brings many school vacations...the dreaded Unstructured Day Plague (insert scary sound effects). I know I'm going to struggle to be creative this summer (hello, it's Spring Break day #14 here and I'm seriously doubting my parenting abilities), but here are some ideas to get us all out of those long-day slumps:

- ✚ Visit a library (check their website or call to find out peak times, then go when it's not that time, lol). Most libraries offer summer reading get-togethers or puppet shows, etc. If your kiddo has a hard time in social groups, I might caution you. Just today I literally had to drag a screaming, kicking child out because another child wanted to share blocks.
- ✚ Picnic lunch/dinner in the park. We often grab a \$5 pizza and head on over-it's easy, fun, and novel. Tip: Go potty before leaving the house.
- ✚ Visit a free museum. Many universities have free/donation entry (UM Natural History <http://lsa.umich.edu/ummnh/visiting/hours>; Detroit Historical Museum <https://detroithistorical.org/>, etc.)
- ✚ Go to the farm, or better yet-visit an animal rescue. Here in Ann Arbor there are plenty of animal rescue sanctuaries that would be happy to have you and your little visit. Heck, visit a friend who owns chickens and volunteer to gather eggs. Try your area, and please share on MCFARES (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MCFARES/FASD/>) what you find!
- ✚ Sign up for Kids Bowl Free all summer. Here's the link to all Michigan participating locations: www.kidsbowlfree.com/all_centers.php#MI
- ✚ Get your skate on with Kids Skate Free: <http://kidsskatefree.com/locations/MI>
- ✚ Sensory Friendly Movies: MetroParent (another excellent activity resource guide) provides theater locations and times for sensory friendly family movies. Check them out, and while you're at it, take a stroll around the site-the calendar is what I mainly use to see what's going on that we may be able to enjoy on a good day. <http://www.metroparent.com/metro-parent-magazine/m-parenting/m-special-needs-resources/sensory-friendly-cinema-children-autism/>
- ✚ A friend sent me this link for Sensory Friendly Saturdays, which looking at it-sounds amazeballs. <https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/sensory-friendly-saturdays/>
- ✚ I personally cannot tolerate the stimulation level at Chuck.E.Cheese, but I just might be willing to check out their Sensory Sundays; 1st Sunday of each month.
- ✚ The US National Parks offer disability passes here: <https://store.usgs.gov/pass/access.html> and a list of Michigan National parks is here: <https://www.nps.gov/state/mi/index.htm> Pass is good for life at ALL US National parks, and covers 3 other adults (under 16 is always free). I think that info is right...check the site to confirm.
- ✚ Tried a 4-H club or Special Olympics? Take a look! <http://4-h.org/find/> and <http://www.somi.org/>
- ✚ Many of our families use the University of Michigan Mott for various medical reasons; a big one being their FASD diagnostic clinic. Did you know there is a totally awesome Family Center on the main floor? The center offers various same-day on and off site activities for families using UM services. We love it there (animatronic triceratops you can feed 24/7)! I happen to know they offer activities that are not listed on the site-like movie Fridays etc. <http://www.mottchildren.org/mott-patient-visitor-guide/family-resource-center>
- ✚ Find a nearby dairy and see if you can set up a tour or come watch at milking time.
- ✚ Tour the Jiffy (<https://www.jiffymix.com/index.php/tours/>) or Sanders Candy Factories (<http://www.sanderscandy.com/factory-tours>).
- ✚ Sea Life Aquarium (<https://www.visitsealife.com/michigan/>) is awesome...but not so low-cost. I saved and we spent the day, also enjoying Rain Forest Café (which is ridiculously expensive, but worth it just that once to see the look on my Little's face :o)

- ✦ Start a fairy garden (Visit YouTube or Pinterest for some ideas). Spend some attachment time gathering up all kinds of trinkets, find the perfect stump, bush, or container...and let your imaginations run.
- ✦ Hit up a state park for a bike ride, some playground time, some photos, and just enjoying nature. <https://www.visitsealife.com/michigan/>
- ✦ Ride the City Bus! It's fairly low-cost, especially if you use transfers-and it's F.U.N
- ✦ Take a Detroit trip and ride the people movers! Visit Campus Martius, sightsee, visit the DIA or Science Center...there's always something fun going on in the D.
- ✦ Zoo trip!
- ✦ Toledo has some amazing places for kids. Check their area (and yours) at: <https://www.familydaysout.com/>
- ✦ Southeast Michigan families might enjoy Detroit Kid City. Check it out here: www.detroitkidcity.com (trigger warning, there might be a jail-like set up; check the site or call first if this is an issue)
- ✦ Tulip season in Holland, MI is coming soon followed by Peony season in Ann Arbor. Day trip!
- ✦ Build a river...if you're super adventurous. More details about this in "Being the External Brain".
- ✦ Check out your local adoption/foster care groups-many of them are setting up camping trips together, pot-lucks, play groups, etc.
- ✦ The Judson Center has advertised many upcoming trainings: www.judsoncenter.org
- ✦ Don't forget MCFARES Project SAFE! Check the MCFARES fb page for details and see you there!
- ✦ Go berry picking. Find a farm near you at <http://www.pickyourown.org/MIharvestcalendar.htm>
- ✦ [Visit Belle Isle. It's free to get on the island with a State Park Pass on your license. Lots of free activities including the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, Belle Isle Nature Zoo, Belle Isle Aquarium and the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory. Visit http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?id=736&type=SPRK for more information.](http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?id=736&type=SPRK)

Do you have other free/low-cost ideas to share with families? Please send them to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.

Kroger Community Rewards

Please consider registering MCFARES as the beneficiary of rewards using your Kroger Plus card. The MCFARES organization number is 91150. We thank you for your support. Funds raised will assist MCFARES in providing support to individuals and families affected by pre-natal exposure to alcohol.





Support Groups for FASD in Michigan

(not all groups are specifically for FASD support)

(Please phone or email contact person prior to attending to ensure that group is still meeting. If information has changed, please email Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org).

Alpena County

FASD Family Support Group, Meets 2nd Thursday of each month; 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Partners in Prevention office in the First Presbyterian Church at the corner of US23 and Long Rapids Road, Alpena. Contact Mary Schalk at mary@nemcpi.org or 989-359-2880 for more information.

Eaton County

Eaton County Foster Adopt Support Group, Meets 1st Thursday monthly, 6 – 8:30 p.m. Pot-luck dinner at 6:00 p.m. Group/training at 6:30 p.m. Childcare available. Eaton Intermediate School District, 1790 Packard Highway, Charlotte, MI 48813. Located right next door to Walmart. Contact Michelle for more information at besa_93@yahoo.com.

Kalamazoo County

Kalamazoo Area Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Support Group (KAFASD), Meets 2nd Tuesday monthly, 6:30 p.m. Augusta McKay Library, 105 S. Webster Street, Augusta, MI 49012. For more information, contact Robin or Kathy at KAFASDgroup@yahoo.com.

Kent County

West Michigan FASD Support Group, Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church, 47 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Contact Sandy Kezenius, 616-874-9522; Corry Tait, 616-550-4273; or Barbara Wybrecht, 616-241-9126 or bmwybrecht@gmail.com for more information.

Self-Advocates with and FASD in Action (SAFA), generally meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. The meeting is for adults age 18 and up who have an official FASD diagnosis. Contact Rob Wybrecht for more information, rob1195@yahoo.com.

Adoptive Families Support Group, Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 – 8 p.m., Holy Family Catholic Church, 9669 Kraft Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316-9723. Contact Shelley Garcia, 1-855-MICH-P2P, x705 or sgarcia@afsn.com for more information.

Macomb County

Project SAFE (Supportive Activities for Everyone), Generally on a Friday or Saturday evening from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at various locations in Macomb County. Families meet for pot-luck dinner followed by supervised play for the children and support group time for adults. Contact Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org or 586-329-6722.

Brunch Bunch, Monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., In Clinton Township, Contact Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org or 586-329-6722 for location details.

Muskegon County

Support group for foster/adoptive/kinship families. Very active group meets weekly for various activities. Contact Janice Hilleary at Bjhilleary@comcast.net or 231-286-7892 (cell phone).

Washtenaw County

Ann Arbor Support Group, Meets 4th Wednesday of each month except November (meets 3rd Wednesday) and December (no meeting), 7 -9 p.m. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Education Center, Classroom #5, 5305 East Huron Drive. Contact Vern Soden for more information, vsoden@umich.edu.

Statewide List

Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Support Groups by County <http://afsn.org/services/foster-adoptive-and-kinship-support-groups-by-county/> (not all groups are FASD-specific)

On-line Support

Families and Supports Affected by FASD: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FaSAFASD>

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MCFARES is the Michigan NOFAS Affiliate

MCFARES Member Agencies

Arc Services of Macomb
(fiduciary)

Family members of affected
individuals

Michigan FASD Task Force

Kids Belong/ACMH Board
Member

Oakland University School
of Nursing

Parent and Child Services,
Inc.



*MCFARES needs you. Call us at
586-329-6722 to find out how you
can help.*
